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Tightening Castro's Noose

We're pleased to note that the plight of those 58 U.S. "students" who've been visiting Cuba indicates that the State Department is stepping up the pressure on Fidel Castro.

A spokesman for the group complained that the return trip, now under way, was delayed because the Cubana Airlines plane was unable to get a landing permit for a necessary intermediate stop.

Philip Luce, an Ohio State University student, said the Cuban government reported it had sought permits to go via Jamaica, British Guiana, the Bahamas, British Honduras, or Trinidad, "but every one of those countries denied permission without giving a reason." The denials "look so suspiciously alike that they seem to be the State Department's work," he added. "It seems the United States is trying to enforce an isolation policy for Cuba in every Caribbean country."

We hope so. And if this is indeed to be U.S. policy, it can be assisted greatly by an amendment to the foreign aid bill sponsored by Florida Reps. Paul Rogers and Dante Fascell and endorsed by Hillsborough County's Rep. Sam Gibbons.

The proposal would deny U.S. aid to any country shipping goods, either economic or military, to Cuba unless the President concluded the national interest made it necessary to waive the ban.

Referring both to the aid ban

proposal and to the reported intensifying of Central Intelligence Agency-sponsored guerrilla activities in Cuba, the Tampa Congressman described the U.S. as "continuing its policy of tightening the military and economic noose around Castro. Eventually, Castro will find it too tight."

Any pull on the noose Congressman Gibbons can apply will be applauded by most of his constituents, who consider effective action against Castro long overdue.